



NEWS RELEASE

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District Attorney Jackie Lacey, Westfield Corp. Take Part in Summer Pet Safety Campaign

With summer underway, Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey today reminded pet owners of the deadly consequences and legal penalties of leaving animals unattended in vehicles.

"As temperatures rise, leaving pets alone in vehicles is not only cruel, it's a crime," District Attorney Lacey said. "In Los Angeles County, we cherish our pets. Don't make the lethal mistake of leaving your pet in a hot car. If you love them, please leave them home."

District Attorney Lacey commended Westfield Corp. for their support of this important community initiative at a news conference this morning at Westfield Fashion Square in Sherman Oaks. Also on hand was Nomo, a 13-year-old white Labrador, who is the designated spokesdog for the pet summer safety campaign.

More than 180 security guards at seven Westfield shopping centers have been trained to respond when animals are found in locked vehicles on mall grounds.

California Penal Code section 597.7 makes it a crime to leave a pet unattended in a vehicle under any condition that could cause harm to the animal. A first offense for a pet owner can be an infraction punishable by a fine or a misdemeanor with a maximum penalty of up to six months in county jail. Owners also could be charged with misdemeanor or felony animal cruelty.

The law allows peace officers, humane officers and animal control officers – but not others – to take all steps reasonably necessary to remove an animal from a car, including breaking into a vehicle.

The summer pet safety campaign includes cautionary posters in English and Spanish that will be displayed at Westfield shopping centers in Arcadia, Canoga Park, Culver City, Sherman Oaks and Valencia, among other locations.

Shoppers are encouraged to contact Westfield security if they see unattended pets in vehicles parked at the mall. In any other setting, residents should contact their local animal control agency. If an animal in an unattended vehicle is in distress, call 911.

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About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 71,000 felony defendants and nearly 112,000 misdemeanor defendants.